

Editorial assessment for author CJ Parmenter, edited by Traci Loudin, returned May 29, 2017

Note: I edited Book 2, so some of my notes may have stemmed from confusion from not having read Book 1. I have excised some potential spoilers below on behalf of the author.

Flying. There are a few times when I feel like people don't take advantage of the fact they can fly, such as during the Prologue, when they're chasing the Huntress, and a few other times in the Pipeworks. Alternately, maybe these areas just need better descriptions so it's clear that it's close quarters or an enclosed space where they can't fly.

Inability to fly. She's basically a disabled person, so it's interesting to see how she gets around in this world, like when she has to be strapped to a dragon and flown around. But it also gives her a lot to be melodramatic and bratty about (see sympathetic characters, below). I also really don't understand why she feels a burning sensation if she tries to fly, or if that was some sort of magical issue. I had hoped that being mentally tied to the bird would give her inner knowledge of how to fly and allow her to overcome her issues. It also seems like she still can't fly even when <spoilers I won't reveal here>

Relationships with royalty. I never got a clear sense of Allele's standing with the king and queen. They don't really feel like parents, and I think at one point it says something like they're not her real parents. I can't tell if they love her or not. Even when they do things like get her reinstated in school or prep her for marriage, I can't tell if they're doing it "for her own good" or for benefit to their royal house, or what. I guess I'm not really seeing their motivation very clearly. And sometimes Allele didn't seem to receive the treatment I would expect a royal child to get, such as the way people talk down to her. I also didn't understand why there was so much emphasis on the king throughout the book, when it seems like the king and queen rule pretty equally. Like when they're going into battle, most of the emphasis is on the king, but I think they're both in battle armor.

Thayne and Laurin in hiding. Maybe if you told me why you put them in hiding in Book 1, I could help brainstorm some ideas with you on how to smooth this out a little. Right now I have no idea what made them go into hiding or how/why Myles was able to claim that he'd saved Allele as a baby. This led to tons of confusion throughout the book, as I tried to understand why Allele hated Myles so much if he was her savior. I'm also not sure why Laurin didn't swoop down to catch the baby.

Confrontations. I don't know why it was such a big deal to Allele that Thayne and Laurin weren't who they said they were, when she finally found out. It's obvious that they're on her side. I mean, I guess it's been a big lie, but it proves that they've also been loyal to her. She should value their loyalty to her all these years, sacrificing their lives for hers. Instead, she alienates them. Same goes for her sister and her betrothed. Why confront them at a time like that? She could use their help getting free of the impending wedding, but instead she just pisses them off.

Sympathetic characters. Allele gradually grows less and less sympathetic to me over the course of the book. If that's what you want, then that's fine. But if not, here's what's going on: Her use of <spoilers> naturally turns her into a drug-addict like character, which I understand. But she gets more annoying from there. She doesn't give a hoot about Mirta's "sickness." She bosses her friends around and uses

them. (She is a princess though, so... ya know.) She's busy being upset about people not being who they said they were, when she should be allying with them and enlisting their aid to save the world. But worst of all for me, she seems to make a lot of dumb decisions, the biggest of all being that she nearly gets everyone she cares about killed. That seemed like a major bad decision.

Cohesion. There's a lot going on at the beginning that has almost nothing to do with what happens at the end. Part of this is probably just middle book syndrome, and so you may be forced to keep all of it because it foreshadows larger series-long storylines. But it did make it a little hard to keep caring about what was going on at certain points. You may want to do a final outline now that you're done writing the book and determine what scenes go in what order, what you can cut (if anything), and figure out how to give a sense of forward progress. Like we've got her out in the wilds in the beginning, and then the surge makes it seem like that will be the primary antagonist of this book. But then we get the water famine, her not being able to fly, her wanting to become a sage, the Darkpinion statue (that never shows back up), and the Guardians, false identities, almost getting sucked into a vortex that never reappears, and then the <spoiler>. Right now it doesn't all feel cohesive.

Ending. It was unclear to me if she ever <spoilers I'll not reveal here!> If not, I would suggest adding something there about her friends. She doesn't even think about asking about them. I would think that would be top of her list besides <more spoilers I won't reveal>.

And here are some **positives** you should be sure not to lose in revisions!

Descriptions. You are a master of including just enough at the right time. I admire the ease at which you seem to apply description!

Cool worldbuilding. The whole Darkpinion history, the Wilds, the way magic works (spellforce, lifespark, aether, spell stylus, etc.), the way royalty in this world is handled differently than our world, etc. It's awesome!

Epic fantasy elements. You've got all the tropes! She has magic and magic weaponry, there's royalty, there's magic in the worldbuilding, there's ancient secrets, involvement by the gods, gods with limitations, and a threat to the entire world. Seriously, I think once you publish the entire series, you should start to see some nice sales. **This hits all the marks for epic fantasy.** We can't expect too much from just 1 or 2 books. :) Keep at it!

I know this may seem like a lot, but I have every confidence it's fewer changes than it looks like at first blush. Let me know if you'd like to brainstorm around anything or if you have questions about anything that didn't seem to be working for me and if it was related to not having read Book 1 or whatnot. Looking forward to continuing to talk with you more and see where this all ends up!

(This is where I would typically include a **summarized action plan** of suggested next steps.)